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Clarke County Easement News

SUMMER

2009

“What a wonderful, wonderful evening.”

That’s how Mel Kohn, land donor and contributor, summed up the Authority’s 4th Annual Donor “Thank You” Reception on June 19. Mother Nature was at her best, serving up some spectacular warm and breezy weather in anticipation of the summer solstice just days away.

A record crowd of contributors gathered to enjoy a fine spread at the Mackay-Smith home and hear Winkie’s report on the Authority’s accomplishments during the last twelve months.



Mel Kohn and Edna Small

The news was all good.

Specifically, since last year’s reception, the Easement Authority has

- **Increased holdings by 24%** – with 3,068 acres now permanently protected
- **Extinguished 22 DURs** (a 30% increase in a single year)—for a total of 98
- **Added nine new names** to its list of land donors – for a total of 41.

Winkie also remarked on the tremendous, ongoing support of donors – 280 strong – who, despite the severe economic downturn, have made close to 100 donations to the Authority already this year.



Winkie Mackay-Smith

Picture this

Easement Authority member, Michael Hobert was the evening’s “shutter-bug,” snapping dozens of fine photos, such as the four gracing this issue.

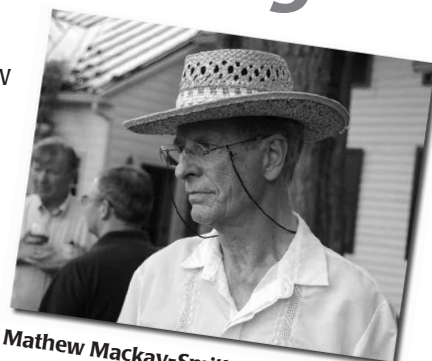
We’ve put an electronic album together for

your enjoyment and posted it on the Clarke County web site. Whether or not you attended the reception on the 19th, we hope you’ll take a moment to visit the site and take a look. Go to www.clarkecounty.gov. Click on “Conservation Easements” on the right. Click on “Donor Reception” in the Index box at the top.

This is the beginning of a new web-based initiative to build stronger ties with current donors and attract new ones. In the coming months, we will start to provide updates on land

donations and purchases, post feature stories on new easement properties, and establish an archive visitors can use to access past newsletters.

This new endeavor will help “spread the word” about the importance of the work and need for ongoing support. It will also pave the way for the next project: accepting contributions online via credit card.



Mathew Mackay-Smith

UPDATE: Greenway Court

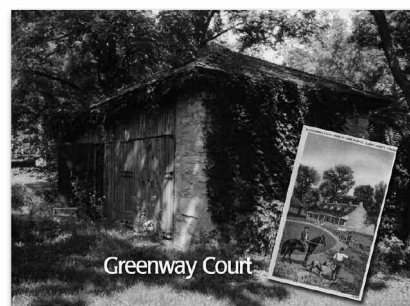
Thanks to some vigorous grass-roots organizing and turbo-charged fund-raising, Greenway Court’s future is now more secure.

Greenway Court was the home of Thomas Lord Fairfax, the only member of the British aristocracy to occupy a permanent residence in the American Colonies. When the Authority purchased a conservation easement on the property in 2003, it not only protected 145 acres of prime open space, it ensured that this national historic landmark—one of just 2,500 to be so designated by the National Park Service—would be protected forever.

A key reason for the designation was the presence of three structures—one an office—thought to be used by a young surveyor, who later became the first president of the United States.

Significant historically, all three structures were in grave need of stabilization to ensure their survival.

A \$47,000 grant from the State was secured to begin the stabilization work, with the help of State Senator Joe May. But the grant had to be matched. And the deadline was just weeks away.



Greenway Court

Did You Know?

Virginia is one of the country’s top five states for protecting land through private conservation easements. And The Piedmont area – of which Clarke County is a part – leads the way.

Source: Piedmont Environmental Council

TRUE OR FALSE?

Once a property is put in permanent easement it’s “frozen in time,” and cannot be changed or improved.
 (See answer on reverse side)

Citizens rallied to form a local branch of the Virginia state preservation agency, which could take donations and oversee the stabilization of the historic building. The Easement Authority and the Clarke County Board of Supervisors each made small contributions, with the balance of the funds coming from private donors.

Pulling together, the match was made with just hours to spare! Now the committee can secure bids to stabilize the structures so they will endure.

THANK YOU DONORS – Current & New – For Your Generous & Ongoing Support!

Robert R. Adams Donald & Prudence Anderson Paz Andrae Scott & Doris Andres Wayne and Linda Armbrust Harry Lee Arnold, Jr. Audley Farm Jeff & Karen Babaie Matthew Baker Timothy & Barbara Bandyke Jim Barb Michael & Raymond Barbehenn Larry Bassett Barbara Batterton Tom & Ann Beard Donn & Lorene Besselievre Hobart Bauhan Harry Benham III John Bieschke Charles & Penni Blake Eric Blankenship Blue Ridge Hunt Doris Bloch Susan K. Blissert David & Mary Borger Barbara A. Boughton Deborah L. 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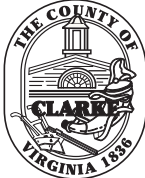
FALSE. Current and future owners of land held in easement retain the right to alter and improve their property, as long as the changes do not conflict with the easement agreement.

This was demonstrated recently in Clarke County when a landowner, whose land was in easement, wanted to increase his parcel’s size by purchasing acreage from a next door neighbor whose property was also in easement.

Though the easements were held by two different organizations — VOF and the Clarke County Easement Authority — and the purchase would result in doubling the size of the smaller property, the action in no way violated the terms of the easement, and the transaction went forward.

Q. *How much financial leverage can the easement authority gain from a single donation?*

A. Contributions can assist the Authority in qualifying for matching grant funds, which can result in up to a three-fold return on every dollar donated.



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